## Division of Children and Family Services

State of Nebraska Dave Heineman, Governor

August 13, 2010

## Our Youth Make a Positive Difference Through Service to Others

By Terri Nutzman, Administrator, Office of Juvenile Services Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

Did you know that on any given day, there are approximately 240 delinquent teens at the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers in Kearney and Geneva? Both YRTCs focus on providing programs that help each individual girl and boy learn new skills so they can return to their community as law abiding and productive citizens.

Over the last five years, Corporation for National and Community Service studies have listed Nebraska as one of the top five states in the nation whose citizens provide volunteer work in the community.

It's our vision to build that same sense of duty and service to others in our youth. Both facilities emphasize opportunities for youth to give back to others in the community. The YRTCs partner with a wide variety of community groups that benefit from the helpful hands of the youth.

Youth help community organizations with concerts, fairs and other community events; visit residents at care centers and assisted living settings and help staff there; take tickets and sell concessions at a local theater; help at recycling centers; participate in the Adopta-Highway program and events like the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life; crochet baby and lap blankets to donate to shelters and small pet blankets for the Humane Society and much more.

Community groups tell us how much they appreciate the help they've received and how impressed they are with the youth. More importantly, the youth have seen the positive difference they've made in other people's lives through giving of themselves, an experience many have never felt before. A big thank you to these youth and to community groups!